

SHERWOOD FOREST;
OR
ROBIN HOOD
AND
LITTLE JOHN,
WITH
COLOURED ENGRAVINGS.

—◆—
A New Edition.



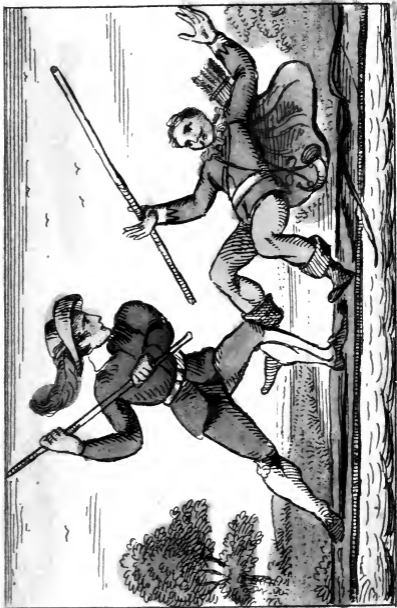
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SHERWOOD FOREST;

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WITH

COLOURED ENGRAVINGS,

BY

ALFRED MILLS;

And a Moral, by the Publisher.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
ROBIN HOOD.



MY little Friends, listen awhile to my story, and I will tell you the bold exploits of the famous Robin Hood, and his comrade Little John.

All England was filled with the renown of Robin Hood, and the great and the valiant stood in fear of him. He never harmed the poor, for he pitied their fate, and only spoiled the wealthy and proud. Robin was born at the merry town of Locksly in Nottinghamshire. His father (who could wrestle and sing with the very best man in the county, and never was beat in a fight) was a stout forester,

and kept the deer for King Richard the first. He was an archer that shot with a lusty strong bow. In those unsettled times when the strongest ruled over the weak, the nation was governed by arbitrary power, and vast tracts of the most fertile land in every part of the kingdom were thrown into forests, to multiply game for the diversion of the King and his nobles. Robin's mother was niece to the celebrated Sir Guy of Warwick, and was sister to Esquire Gamewell, of great Gamewell Hall, about forty miles distant from Locksley, who was famed for his beef and strong beer. His neighbours often went to partake of his bounty; he welcomed them all, and pleased every guest with good cheer.

One day (when Robin was about fourteen years old) his mother thus spoke to her spouse. "Dear husband, to-morrow is Christmas-day, therefore let Robin and I take a ride to Gamewell Hall this morning, to see my brother, and taste his good ale and pudding."—"My dear Joan," said his father, "I consent. Take one of my horses and make haste, for 'tis a long ride." The gelding was saddled, and

Robin mounted, drest out in the finest degree, with a new suit of clothes, having a blue bonnet, and a cloak that hung down to his knees, (as the fashion then was.) His mother put on her holiday gown of homespun make, and when they were well seated, Robin galloped away, and never gave over till they alighted at Gamewell Hall. The squire, who was overjoyed to see his sister, kissed her over and over, and cried all the while, "Welcome, kind sister, to Gamewell Hall."

Roast-beef, plumb-pudding, good brawn, and mince-pies, were then placed upon every table. Squire Gamewell sat down with them, and said, "Neighbours, eat and be free, and drink every one his fill." When dinner was over his chaplain said grace; "Now let us be merry, my friends," says their host; "Lo! it rains, and it blows; so lay some more wood on the fire; let each man keep his seat, and call for more ale." Thus when they had drank as long as they were able of his strong March beer, and all were got jocund and gay, some sung Christmas hymns most devoutly, some told a merry

story, and others diverted themselves at sundry frolicksome games. Squire Gamewell then said, " Bid cousin Robin come hither, for I hear he is a brave little lad, and can shew us some pleasant tricks at gambols or wrestling." Robin Hood then came in, and fresh pastimes were quickly begun; when (strange to relate) though but fourteen years old, he beat every one at all kinds of sport, for his strength and his skill proved superior to all. His uncle, the Squire, was right joyful to see this, and cried out, " I vow and declare, Robin, thou shalt go no more home. Stay here, my brave boy, and I will make thee my comrade and heir; thou shalt from henceforth have plenty of gold, and fifty good archers shall wait upon thee and be ready at thy call. My estate when I die shall be thine."

Bold Robin accepted this offer with joy, and thus dwelt with his Uncle many years at Gamewell Hall, where he learnt the use of the bow, and practised till he became the most expert archer and best marksman in all the country. Then whenever he saw a fit occasion he and all his gallant men would resort to the forests

and woods to live in revelry and amusement, and chase the fat deer over the hills.

When bold Robin Hood was about twenty years old he happened to meet with a jolly stranger, whom he afterwards called Little John. This man, though called *little*, was a lusty young blade; his limbs were large, and his person was seven feet high. Wherever he went people quaked at his name, and he made all his enemies fly before him.—’Twas thus their acquaintance began.

Robin and his men had built in Sherwood forest a strong and secret *bower*, so artfully contrived and hidden among the woods that none but themselves could find it out, and to which they retreated in case of need. Here Robin once continued fourteen days with his merry bowmen, and then he said to them, “Tarry awhile in this grove, my brave men; we have had no good sport for these many long days, therefore I will wander abroad a short way, to seek for some amusement, But do you be attentive and hear, whenever I blow an alarm with my loud bugle horn, for by this means I will let you know if I want your assistance.

After he had strayed some time near a brook, he spied a tall and lusty stranger coming towards him. They happened to meet on a long narrow wooden bridge, and neither of them would give way to let the other pass. Robin Hood at length being enraged, drew an arrow from his quiver, and threatened to shoot at the stranger's breast. "You dare not," said the other, "for if you offer to touch the string I'll beat out your teeth, and tumble you into the brook. You see I have nothing but a staff in my hand, and none but a coward would offer to fight with weapons so different." "The name of a coward," said Robin, "I scorn; I will therefore lay aside my bow and arrows, and take a stout staff to prove thy manhood." He then stepped to a thicket of trees and chose him a good oaken staff, which when he had done, he ran to the stranger, accepted the challenge, and the sport was quickly begun.—At first Robin gave the other such a stroke that it made his sides ring; the stranger then said, "I must pay you for this, friend, and give you as good as you send, for as long as I am able to handle a staff I scorn to die in

your debt." He then gave Robin so hearty a knock on the crown that the blood ran trickling down to his ears. Robin now engaged more fiercely, and laid on his blows so thick and fast, that he made his adversary's coat smook as if it had been all on fire; but the stranger waxing more furious and strong, at length gave Robin such a terrible side blow, that it quite beat him down and tumbled him into the brook. Then in laughter he called out to his fallen foe, "Prithee where art thou now, my good fellow?" "Why faith," said Robin, "I swim with the tide as every man should do."—He now swam along to the bank, and pulled himself out by a thorn, and then said to the conqueror, "Thou art a brave soul, I will contend no longer with thee."

He then took up his horn, and blew such a blast with it as made the hills echo all around. Presently they saw coming hastily down the hill-side a band of brave archers, cloathed in a livery of green. They quickly came up to Robin Hood, and Will Stukely (their leader) cried out, "Pray what is the matter, good master; why you seem wet to the skin!" "No

matter for that," said Robin, "the man that stands by, has in fighting tumbled me into the brook." "If that be the case," said his men, "he shall not escape without a good ducking in the same stream." "Not so, my brave men," said Robin Hood, "he is a stout hearty fellow that fought me fairly."—"My friend," said he to the stranger, "pray be not afraid, for no harm shall befall thee; all these are my bowmen, that come at my call, and if thou wilt live with me, and be one of them, thou shalt quickly put on such a dress as theirs; we will teach thee the use of the bow, and how to shoot the fat deer, for we live gloriously without any restraint, and fear not the laws."

"Then here is my hand," replied the stranger, "I'll serve thee with a willing mind, for I perceive you are all brave hearty fellows. My name is John Little, I am a man of some skill, and at all times will play my part well." "His name shall be altered," said Will Stukely, "I like not the sound of *John Little*, his name shall be called *Little John*."

This motion pleased well, and as soon as they came to their bower in the wood,

a great feast was prepared; two of their men shot each a young doe, and a cask of strong liquor was brought forth, with all kinds of the best provisions. Thus their new comrade, as long as he lived, though taller and stouter than any other of Robin Hood's men, went always by the name of Little John.

As Robin Hood walked about the forest one day he met with a comely young man, dressed in a doublet of silk, with scarlet hose, travelling boldly along with a stout bow in his hand. A herd of fat deer happened to be standing not far distant, which when the stranger saw, he bent his bow, and shot the best of them through the heart. "Well shot, well shot," said Robin Hood, "thy aim was good and sure; I like a bold archer well, and if thou wilt be one of my comrades, and live in my bower, I will treat thee with noble entertainment, and pay thee well beside." "Go talk to thy Grandame," said the stranger, "and make no such wild offers to me, or else I shall use thee somewhat rudely." "Thou hadst better be quiet," said Robin, "for if thou shouldst offer to make an assault thou

wilt dearly repent of the deed; my arm is not weak, and thou mayest see that I carry a bow; besides, though I now am alone, should I blow an alarm with my loud bugle horn, I should quickly have at my command an hundred brave men."

"I defy all thy power," said the other, "and if thou offerest to touch thy horn, my good broad sword shall soon cut it in two, and strike thee to the dust." Bold Robin Hood then bent his stout bow, and stood ready to shoot at his foe. The stranger also took his long bow, and as readily stood on his guard. "Prithee let us hold our hands," said Robin Hood, "for if we attempt to shoot, one of us must infallibly die; let us now lay aside our bows, and try each others skill with bucklers and good broad swords.

"As I live," said the stranger, "I will not fly a foot, and will soon give thee enough of the sport." These rivals in skill then fought stoutly and bold, and many an hard blow resounded upon their bucklers. They aimed their strong blows above and below, from the head to the feet, but neither of them could make the other give way. Robin Hood at length

gave the stranger such a mighty stroke that it made the fire fly from his eyes, and almost deprived him of his senses. "I hope to give thee a blow," said the stranger, "that shall shame all the rest, and put an end to the fray." Then presently taking good aim with his sword, he struck Robin upon the head with such force that the blood soon appeared, and ran trickling down his cheeks. "By my faith," said Robin Hood, "I must now beg for quarter; prithee, my brave fellow tell me who thou art, and what is thy name, for I love and respect a brave man." The stranger answered, "I was born and bred in the town of Maxfield, and my name is Gamewell. I am forced to fly from home and to hide myself, for having killed my father's steward, who had falsely accused me, and I came to this forest to seek a bold uncle of mine, who goes by the name of Robin Hood." Art thou then a cousin of bold Robin Hood's?" answered he; "had I known it before, our fight had been much sooner done." "On my life," said the stranger, "I am his first kin, and son of his mother's second brother, who now lives at court with the

king, and for the gallant deeds he performed in Palestine, he is soon to be made a noble peer." When Robin heard this he embraced him with great joy, and soon let him know that he himself was his uncle, Robin Hood. They then set out for the green shady bower, and met Little John by the way, who cried out, "Prithee dear master where have you been, that you have tarried so long from home?" "I met with this stranger," said Robin, "we have had a fight and he has beaten me soundly." "Then let me try my skill with him," said he, "and see if he can beat me as well." "O no, O no, O no," said Robin Hood, "it must not be so Little John; for he is my kinsman, the son of my mother's own brother, and cousins I have no more. He shall be a bold archer of mine, my foreman next to thee, and his name shall now be called Will Scarlet. Thus I Robin Hood, and thou Little John, and my kinsman, Will Scarlet shall have the command, and we will be three of the bravest foresters that are in the north country."

As Robin Hood wandered about the fields one day he met a fair lady, who came weeping along the road in great dis-

tress. "O why do you weep so pitifully," said Robin, "and what is the cause of your great distress? tell me, do you weep for loss of gold, or weep you the loss of a lover? perhaps some bad man has done you a wrong, or led you astray? if so, my strong arm shall be enlisted in your cause." "I weep not for loss of gold," she replied; "I weep not for the loss of a lover, nor has any man done me a wrong, or led me astray into sin; but I weep for the sorrowful fate of three brothers, the bravest and dearest of men, who all are condemned to die." "What church have they robbed," said Robin, "or what parish priest have they killed, or have they in treason been caught against their rightful king?" "No church have they robbed," the lady replied, "no parish priest have they slain, nor have in treason been caught against their rightful king." "O what have they done then," said Robin, "to deserve so unhappy a fate?" "O woe is me!" said the lady, "for my brothers must die, and only for killing the king's fallow deer." "They shall not die," said bold Robin; "therefore go your way quickly home, and I will hasten

to Nottingham for the sake of your three hapless brothers."

Robin Hood then set out to Nottingham, and in his way met with a poor beggar man, who came walking slowly and mournfully along the highway. "What news, what news, my old man?" said Robin, "what news dost thou bring from the town?" "O there is weeping and wailing in Nottingham town," cried the old beggar man, "for the sake of three yeomen who are condemned to die, and they are all greatly loved."

The beggar had a tattered old coat upon his back, which was neither green yellow, nor red, but some of every colour, and Robin Hood thought it would be no disgrace for once to be in a beggar's dress. "Come pull off thy coat, my old beggar," said he, "and thou shalt put on mine, and forty shillings beside I will give thee to buy bread and beer." When Robin was thus arrayed, away he went to the town, and when he came thither he soon found the Sheriff and his men, and likewise the three sorrowful yeomen, who were going to die. "One favour, one favour I humbly beg," said bold Robin to

the Sheriff; "that I may be hangman when the three yeomen are to die." "'Tis granted with free good will," said the Sheriff; "therefore go and prepare thyself for the office, for they have but few hours to live."

Robin Hood then returned to his brave band of archers, whom he brought and placed in ambush near the field where the gallows was fixed; afterwards going again to the Sheriff, the three yeomen were led to the appointed spot. "Now begin thy office, my jolly hangman," said the Sheriff; "for these yeomen no longer must live; and thou shalt have all their good cloathing, and all their money besides." "O I will have none of their cloathing," said he, "and will touch none of their money; but I will have three blasts with my loud bugle horn, that their souls may fly to heaven."

Then Robin mounted the gallows, with his horn in his hand, and he made it sound loudly and shrill, when quickly came marching over the field an hundred or more of his faithful bowmen, all cloathed in green. "Whose men are all these," said the Sheriff, "that come marching so

boldly this way?" "O these are all Robin Hood's men," said he, "and they are come to fetch me, and likewise to take the three yeomen, who were going to die." "O take them, pray take them without more ado," said the Sheriff; "for there is no man in all Nottinghamshire that can do the like of thee."

In summer time when the leaves were green, and birds sang merrily upon every tree, Robin Hood set out to Nottingham in disguise, and as he went along the road he overtook a jolly tinker. Robin greeted him kindly, and after some discourse, said, "Tell me where thou comest, my jolly fellow, and in what town thou wast bred, for I hear there is sad news in Nottingham, and when thou knowest it thou mayest not chuse to go thither." "I come from Banbury," said the other, "where I was born and bred, and am a tinker by trade; now tell me the news thou hast heard." "My news is only this," said Robin; "two tinkers were yesterday set in the stocks for drinking ale and beer." "If that be all," said the tinker, "I value not your news a farthing; for in drinking good ale and beer,

I am sure never to be outdone, and resolve to have my share ; and if I may judge by your looks, you often take a good part." "Now," said Robin Hood ; "tell me what news has come to thy ears, for as thou travelest from town to town, thou canst never be in want of good stories." "All the news that I lately have heard," said the tinker, "relates to a bold outlaw, who is called Robin Hood ; the king has given out warrants to apprehend him, and I have one in my pocket to take him wherever I can find him ; and if thou canst tell me where he is, and wilt assist me to seize him, it will make us rich men, for an hundred pounds, or more, will be our reward." "Let me see the warrant," said Robin, "that I may know if it be good, and I will do the best that I can to assist thee in taking him this very night." "My warrant I shall not let thee see," said the tinker, "for I dare not trust it out of my hand, and if you will not tell me where this Robin Hood is to be found, I must seek him out and take him myself."

As soon as they came to Nottingham, they went to a good inn and called for

strong ale and wine, and the tinker drank so much that he forgot what he had to do, so that at night Robin made haste away, taking the tinker's warrant, and left him in the lurch to pay all the reckoning. When the tinker awoke in the morning, and found that his comrade was gone, he called for the host, and said, "I had a warrant from the king, that might have done me good, for it was to take a bold outlaw that goes by the name of Robin Hood; but now my warrant is stolen away from me, and I have not money enough to pay the score, for the man that came with me last night is gone and fled away." "The man that thou speak of," said the host, "was that same Robin Hood, who sometimes comes hither in disguise. I knew him right well, for he once saved my life from a cowardly foe, and as he does all the good that he can for the poor, and only spoils the wealthy and proud, I could not betray him." "O had I but known that this was he," said the tinker, "I would have tried the strength of his arm; but I will now go seek him out, whatever befalls me, therefore tell me what I have to pay, and I

will leave my tools with thee, in pledge, till I return."

The tinker then went his way, and soon learnt in the town that the only way to find out bold Robin was to seek him in the parks, killing the king's deer. Away then he went, and made no delay till he found Robin Hood, chasing the deer through the woods; "what bold knave is that," said Robin Hood, "that comes so freely here to hinder my sport." "No knave am I," cried the tinker, "and that you soon will know to your cost; which of us has done a wrong my crab-tree staff shall decide." The tinker and Robin then fought manfully, and their fray lasted three hours or more, but at length the tinker thrashed Robin's bones so sore, that he made him cry out for peace, "One favour I have to beg," said Robin Hood, "and I pray thee to grant it me." "The only favour that I will grant," said the tinker, "is to hang thee on a tree." But while the tinker turned round, Robin blew his horn, at the sound of which, Little John and Will Scarlet quickly appeared; and said, "What is the matter, dear master, that you look so forlorn?"

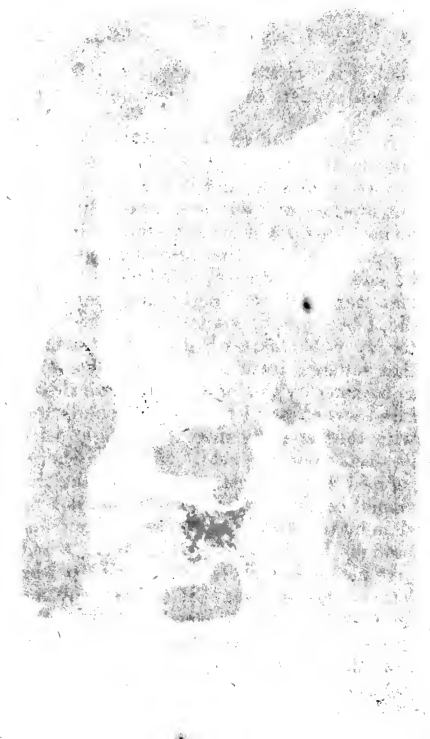
“Here is a tinker standing by,” said Robin, “that has thrashed my bones sore.” When they heard this they were going to seize him by the throat, but Robin said, “Let our quarrel now cease, that henceforth we may be friends with the tinker, and he with us; and if he will consent to be one of us, I will yearly give him fifty pounds, as long as he lives, which he may spend in the way he likes best.” So at last the tinker consented, and went along with them to their bower, where he was entertained with good cheer, and taught the use of the bow.

As Robin Hood one day sat under the Green Oaken Tree, tidings came to him, by a speedy and faithful messenger, that Will Stukely had been surprised by the Sheriff, and led to prison, having been basely betrayed by three persons that were hired to entrap him; but before the Sheriff’s men could secure him, two of them were slain by his hand. He now was condemned to die, and was to be hanged on the morrow. When Robin Hood received this news it grieved his very soul, and he and all his gallant men then swore that they would rescue their

comrade, and bring him back, or else would die fighting for his sake. He presently cloathed himself in scarlet array, and dressed all his men in green, making as goodly a show as ever was seen in the land, with every man a good broad sword, and every man a good yew bow. And when they came near to the strong castle in which Will Stukely was confined, Robin Hood said to his men, "I think it right to tarry awhile here in ambush, and send some person on to yonder Pilgrim, that stands under the castle wall, to obtain some intelligence of our friend." Then went a bold young man and said to the pilgrim, "Tell me, thou good old man (if thou hast heard it said) when must Will Stukely die? for I am told he lies in prison here, and must lose his life, because he belonged to bold Robin Hood." "Alas!" said the old pilgrim, "'tis much too true; for Robin Hood and his men were ever kind to the poor, and never harmed the honest man, therefore they love him.—To day, this very day, must Will Stukely die, and yonder tall gallows is prepared for him. O had his gallant master known of his fate, some rescue

would have come 'ere now, for a few of his bold archers would have soon set him free."

No sooner had this young man left the pilgrim, than the gates of the castle were thrown open wide, and Will Stukely came out, guarded on every side by the Sheriff's men. Now when he was come out, into the plain, and saw that no relief appeared, he said to the Sheriff, in a bold and gallant way, "Now since I must certainly die, I beg you to grant me one request, for my noble master had never yet a man that suffered death in so shameful a way as to hang by the neck. Give me therefore a sword, and let me be unbound, and with thee and thy men I will fight till I lie dead upon the field." But the Sheriff refused his request, and swore that he should be shamefully hanged, and not be slain by the sword. "Then do but unbind my hand," said Will Stukely, "and give me neither sword or bow, and if I be hanged this day, may St. Peter deny me an entrance into heaven." "Hold thy peace," said the Sheriff, "for on the gallows thou shalt certainly die; and so shall thy master, that knave Robin Hood, if





A beautiful Damsel riding on a black Palfrey.

ever he comes to my hands." "O cowardly slave!" said Will Stukely; "O faint-hearted shameful wretch, that dares not to fight with an unarmed man; my master scorns thy dastard soul, and all thy cowardly crew."

Now when they were come to the gallows, and Will Stukely was going to bid adieu to this world, out of a bush steps Little John, and comes towards the place; "I beg thee, Will Stukely," said he, "just to come and take leave of thy friends, I needs must borrow thee for a time; pray what say you, good Sheriff." "Now as I live," said the Sheriff, "I will know who this villain is, that comes so boldly here; therefore let him not escape, for he is some sturdy rebel, that ought to be punished severely." But Little John hastily cut away Stukely's bands, and from one of the Sheriff's men snatched a sword, which he put into his hands, crying, "Take this, my friend, for thou canst wield it well; defend thyself a while, till further succour shall come." These two then turned themselves back to back, in the midst of the Sheriff's men, and fought with wonderful skill, till Robin Hood ap-

proached, with his band of stout bowmen, and their arrows quickly flew all around, which made the Sheriff and his doughty men fly speedily from the field. "I little thought," said Will Stukely, "when first I came to this spot, that I here should have met with Little John, or seen my master's face. What thanks can I return that will pay the debt I owe? but since he vouchsafed to come and again has set me free, I will ever obey him with heart and with hand, as long as I live; and to you, my brave comrades, my dearest thanks are due."

"Now once again," said Robin Hood, "we will meet in the shady green wood, to make our bow strings twang, and merrily pass the day."

As Robin Hood, Will Scarlet, and Little John were walking over the plain one day, they beheld a beautiful damsel riding upon a black palfrey, all alone, clad in a riding suit of mourning hue, with a cypress veil falling over her face, through which her rose-like cheeks and comely countenance blushed like the morning light. She passed along with slow and silent pace, and seemed oppressed with

grief and sadness—"Tell me, O tell me, fair damsel," said Robin Hood, "what is the cause of thy distress? from whence art thou come, and whither art thou bound, since thou comest in this mournful state?" "From London I come," said the damsel, "and from the banks of the Thames. That city, O grief to tell! is encircled with foreign arms, for Lewis the haughty prince of France, and son to Philip the French king, has brought over a mighty army, and threatens to lay this kingdom waste, unless our royal princess, the daughter of England's king, be given him for a spouse, or else three bold and skilful champions must be found that dare to fight man to man against this prince and two tremendous giants, whose grisly looks and flaming eyes strike terror wherever they come. The king hath vowed and said, that the princess shall be the prize of that courageous man who shall slay the giants, and that he shall have her for his bride. Now the king hath sent four damsels abroad, to the east, to the west, to the north, and the south, (of whom I myself am one) to seek for bold and valiant champions, that dare to

contend in his cause. But all in vain have we sought throughout the land, for none are found so bold, as to venture his life to preserve the fair princess, and therefore is she lost." "Tell me," said Robin Hood, "O tell me the day in which the combat must be fought, and I request no more." "On midsummer day," said the damsel, "on the twenty-fourth of June, this fatal combat must be fought, or else the princess then must be resigned to the proud prince of France." She spake these words in a sorrowful tone, while the crystal tears fell trickling down her cheeks. Then with many a heavy sigh she took her leave, and her palfrey bore her out of sight.

The fatal news struck Robin to the heart, and he fell down on the grass, shewing by his actions and his troubled face the perplexity of his mind. "Where lies your grief, my dear master?" said Will Scarlet, "if the damsel's bright eyes have pierced your heart, I will presently fetch her back again." "O no, O no," said Robin Hood, "tis not the damsel's bright eyes that have pierced my heart, but the sorrowful fate of the distressed

princess. I myself will go and fight these mighty giants, and set the lady free." "May I die an evil death," said Little John, "if I suffer thee to go alone.—I will bear thee company over the world."—"Must I be left behind?" said Will Scarlet? "no that shall never be—I will make the third man in the fight, and then we shall be three to three." These words cheered Robin to the soul, and joy shone upon his face; he hugged them both in his arms and vowed he would love them well.

Soon after they set out on their journey, arrayed like pilgrims with long staffs in their hands, and a scrip and bottle by their sides, as if they were lately come from the Holy Land, yet although they made the greatest speed, they were but just in time; for when they arrived the princess was led forth to be delivered to the proud prince of France, who walked about the lists with the two huge giants by his side. "Bring out your valiant champions, ye Englishmen," cried he, "or bring hither my bride; if not, proud London shall be burnt, and all its buildings razed."

The king and queen then came forth, and said with weeping eyes, "Our valiant men are all slain by the sword, and we have no defence; lo therefore we have brought our dearest daughter out to be resigned to thee." Then stepped up bold Robin Hood, and said to the king, "My sovereign lord it must not be.—A princess so beautiful and fair was not designed for this proud tyrant's hand, and she shall now be saved from his power." At this the prince of France began to rage, and cried, "Fool that thou art, how dar'st thou thus boldly advance, to step between my bride and me? My arm shall strike thee dead." "I scorn thy frowns, and I scorn thy power," said Robin Hood; "I defy thy arm, and challenge thee to the fight; and as for thy two Goliaths who stand by thy side, here are two little Davids just by, that soon can tame their proud spirits."

The king then sent for bright armour, for lances, swords, and shields, and arrayed Robin Hood and his men; the trumpets sounded the charge, and each singled out his man. They struck with such mighty force that their armour was





He hewed his Head from his shoulders.

soon hewed into pieces, and blood gushed out from every limb. At length the prince of France gave Robin Hood an unexpected blow that forced him to reel about the field, as though he had been going to yield up his life, but soon he recovered and stood on his guard, crying, "That blow shall be well repaid, and our quarrel quickly decided; this stroke shall make a full divorce betwixt thy bride and thee." Then with his burnished blade he hewed his head from his shoulders and struck him to the ground. The giants when they saw their prince lie dead began to rage and swear; "Thy turn shall be next," said Little John to his foe, "so follow thou thy master." Then whirling his keen weapon high in the air, he cleaved the giant to his belt, and pierced his wicked heart. Will Scarlet had also played his part well, for he brought the other giant down on his knee by a mighty blow, and said, "Go, follow thy comrades to the pit of destruction, and there repent of thy crimes." Quickly he ran his sharp pointed sword through his body and made a deep and gashly wound. The giant foamed and cursed in writhing agony, and fell upon the ground a lifeless corse.

The air was now rent with universal shouts, and the lists resounded with songs of joy; the king and queen came walking towards the place, leading their beautiful daughter in their hand, and going up to the three valiant and unknown champions, returned them hearty thanks with tears of joyful pleasure. "Tell me, O tell me," said the king, "from whence you come, and who you are, for your gallant deeds speak you of noble blood." "Before I declare my name, my gracious king," said Robin Hood, "I have one request to make." "I swear by my crown," said the king, "to grant you whatever you ask." "Then I beg a full pardon," said he, "for all my merry men in Sherwood bower, and also for me, Robin Hood, for Will Scarlet and Little John, who now are standing here."—"Art thou Robin Hood?" said the king;—"for the valour thou hast now displayed I freely grant thy pardon, and bid you all three right welcome.—I promised that the princess should be the victor's prize, but you have all an equal claim, and she cannot have but one." "The princess shall choose," said Robin, "and take the man she likes best." The princess then cast her eyes upon all three

with a sweet and modest grace, and took Will Scarlet by the hand, saying, "Here I make my choice."

A noble lord was standing by (called the Earl of Maxfield) who now advanced, and looking earnestly in Will Scarlet's face, quickly burst into tears, and said, "I once had a son, who was greatly like thee and he went by the name of young Gamewell; he fled away from his friends, and I fear is now dead, because I have long sought him in vain, for I dearly loved him and greatly I mourn his loss." Will Scarlet then fell on his knees and cried, "O, my father, behold me here! behold your son! your young Gamewell kneels at your feet." But who can tell his father's joy, and the joy of all their friends, to have him thus restored and chosen to be the spouse of England's beautiful princess, and favoured by the king.

The wedding then was kept in royal stile, with feasts, and sports, and noble entertainments, while mirth and joy resounded through the land, because they no longer stood in fear of the proud prince of France, who had threatened to lay all the kingdom waste. The king gave great

gifts to Robin and Little John, who shortly after returned to their merry comrades in Sherwood gay bower.

And now I must bring my story to a close, and tell the unhappy death of valiant Robin Hood.

When the last gallant fight was over, Robin and his men returned to their bower, and after they had recovered from their bruises and wounds, they lived some time together, as they had used to do; but after a while Robin Hood fell ill, and because he required to be treated with skill he went to Birkley Abbey, where they sent for a Monk to bleed him, and this Monk being eager to get the reward that king Henry had set upon Robin Hood's head, most treacherously blooded him to death.

Thus he that never feared a sword or bow, or any man that lived, was basely killed in letting of blood, and died without a friend to close his eyes. As soon as his men heard of his death they were filled with grief and dismay, and fled away in haste. Some of them crossed the seas, and went to Flanders, some to France, and some to Spain and Rome.

MORAL.

Now my gentle reader, having concluded the History of bold Robin Hood, let us endeavour to draw a lesson of instruction from his life.—In the character of Robin Hood we may observe a strange mixture of courage, generosity, and disloyal propensity. Having soon dissipated in riotous extravagance the estate his Uncle left him, his roving and adventurous disposition would not suffer him to seek some honest and peaceable pursuit, but urged him to become a traitor to his king, and a terror to the country he infested. It has been urged in his defence that he was noble-minded and generous to his friends and associates—that he never robbed or injured the industrious poor—and that the wealthy proud, and the lordly tyrant were *alone* the objects of his dislike and vengeance; and that *even* those he plundered to relieve indigence and distress:—so far then he may differ from the generality of banditti, but that he was an outlaw, a robber, and a daring violator of the laws there is no question, and as such he is to be despised. It may be a matter of surprise to some of my Juvenile Readers that he who was so famed for courage and skill should so often suffer himself to be overcome in his encounters; but in this there was a design and policy, had

he *conquered* his opponents, which he was generally enabled to do, he would have *gained* a triumph, but have *lost* a comrade; on the contrary, by resigning the combat, he gained another *follower*, and by that means increased his numbers, and thus become more formidable. Upon the whole then my little friends, such characters as Robin Hood, when they appear in real life, ought to be shunned and despised; disloyalty is a *treasonable* offence, violence towards men is *unlawful*, and robbery a *degrading* crime; learn then by this example to honour the king, obey the laws, and live in peace and friendship with all mankind, and while the History of Robin Hood serves to beguile and amuse a vacant hour, learn to look upon his *courage* as *unlawful*, his profession *degrading*, and the whole of his conduct *violent* and *unpardonable*.

Be brave and honest, loyal, great, and good,
And in Virtue's cause *alone* a Robin Hood.

THE END.

